

OPINION 1138

GIRAFFA CAMELOPARDALIS AUSTRALIS RHOADS, 1896
(MAMMALIA) SUPPRESSED

RULING – (1) Under the plenary powers, the species-group name *australis* Rhoads, 1896, as published in the combination *Giraffa camelopardalis australis*, is hereby suppressed for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy.

(2) The species-group name *australis* Rhoads, 1896, as published in the combination *Giraffa camelopardalis australis*, and as suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above, is hereby placed on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology with the Name Number 1060.

HISTORY OF THE CASE Z.N.(S) 1942

An application for the suppression of *Giraffa camelopardalis australis* Rhoads, 1896, was first received from Mr W.F.H. Ansell (*Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, Zambia*) and Dr Anne Innis Dagg (*University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada*) on 26 October 1970. It was sent to the printer on 18 March 1971 and published on 8 December 1971 in *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 28: 100–101. Public notice of the possible use of the plenary powers in the case was given in the same part of the *Bulletin* as well as to the statutory serials and to two mammalogical serials.

The object of the application was to safeguard the name *Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata* de Winton, 1899, of which Rhoads's name was taken to be a senior synonym. De Winton's name had been protected against its senior secondary homonym, *Camelopardalis giraffa reticulata* Weinland, 1863, and placed on the Official List of Specific Names with the Name Number 2430, in Opinion 944 (*Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 27: 222–223, 1971). However, in discussion with Dr A.W. Gentry (*British Museum (Natural History), London*), the applicants concluded that *G.c. reticulata* de Winton, 1899 applied to the (northern) reticulated giraffe, and *G.c. australis* Rhoads, 1896, to the Cape giraffe, and that no synonymy existed. They accordingly withdrew their application, and a note to that effect was published in *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 31: 171, December 1974.

On 27 January 1975 Dr L.B. Holthuis (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, Netherlands*) wrote to point out that the ruling in Opinion 944 protected *G.c. reticulata* de Winton,

1899, only from one threat (that posed by the senior secondary homonym *G.g. reticulata* Weinland, 1863), but did not render it inviolable from all threats. If, therefore, the application by Ansell & Dagg was not acted upon, those who held that there was after all synonymy between *G.c. australis* Rhoads, 1896, and *G.c. reticulata* de Winton, 1899, would be obliged to use the former name. In a later letter he stated that, in the interests of preserving a name already on the Official List, he had no objection to the suppression of *G.c. australis* Rhoads. These two letters were combined in a note published in *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 33: 136–137 alongside a note by Dr Dagg listing ten works published between 1949 and 1971 in which *G.c. reticulata* de Winton, 1899, had been used for the reticulated giraffe. In correspondence, Mr Ansell pointed out that, if *G.c. australis* Rhoads, 1896, was available for the reticulated giraffe it should be suppressed; if not, it was a junior synonym of *G. giraffa* Boddaert, 1785; in any event, he and Dr Dagg had shown the name to be a cause of confusion, so that its suppression would be justified whatever view was taken of its taxonomic position.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

On 5 September 1978 the members of the Commission were invited to vote under the Three-Month Rule on Voting Paper (1978)18 either for (A) the proposals set out in *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 28: 100–101, or for (B) the grant of precedence to *G.c. reticulata* de Winton, 1899, over *G.c. australis* Rhoads, 1896. At the close of the voting period on 5 December 1978, the state of the voting was as follows:

For Alternative A – twelve (12), received in the following order: Melville, Alvarado, Eisenmann, Vokes, Brinck, Willink, Habe, Tortonese, Cogger, Binder, Corliss, Bernardi.

For Alternative B – four (4): Mroczkowski, Dupuis, Welch, Nye.

Abstention – Bayer.

Sabrosky returned a late affirmative vote. Ride was on leave of absence. No voting papers were returned by Heppell, Kraus and Starobogatov.

Dr Holthuis recorded a negative vote on both alternatives in the following terms: "In my opinion, it is perfectly clear from Rhoads's account of *G. camelopardalis* (1896: 518) (1) that he considered his own Somali specimen to belong to the northern (nominate) subspecies, (2) that in his view no name was available for the southern subspecies from the Cape of Good Hope region, and (3) that therefore he proposed the new name *australis* for this southern subspecies. The species-group name *australis* Rhoads,

1896, is thus invalid being a junior synonym of the name *giraffa* Boddaert, 1785, and there is no need to suppress this name." The Secretary replied that he found it impossible to tell, from Rhoads's account, whether his name was a senior synonym of *reticulata* de Winton or a junior synonym of *giraffa*, but that as the subject had been discussed at such length, there was good reason for the Commission to act.

The following comments were sent in by members of the Commission with their voting papers:

Eisemann: "To preserve *reticulata* already on the Official List from possible question from the relatively unknown name *australis*, I favour the suppression of *australis* Rhoads."

Bayer: "Repeated readings of Rhoads's text fail to convince me that he was referring to anything but the Cape giraffe in proposing the name *G.c. australis*, which is therefore a synonym of *G. giraffa* Boddaert, 1785. It is no threat to any name for the northern subspecies, and I fail to see any need to suppress it or to give it relative precedence over a name with which it cannot compete."

Nye: "As a general rule I consider that subjective synonyms should be dealt with under the relative precedence procedure. This application, however, deals with a very well-known group of animals, and if a majority of the votes are in favour of outright suppression, my vote should be changed to increase that majority."

Bernardi: "Ce choix me semble le plus simple et je ne tiens pas à sauvegarder un nom placé sur une 'Official List'."

ORIGINAL REFERENCE

The following is the original reference for a name placed on an Official Index by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

australis, *Giraffa camelopardalis*, Rhoads, 1896, *Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philadelphia* for 1896: 518

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the votes cast on voting paper (78)18 were cast as set out above, that the proposal contained in that voting paper has been duly adopted under the plenary powers, and the decision so taken, being the decision of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, is truly recorded in the present Opinion No. 1138.

R.V. MELVILLE *Secretary*
International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature
London 27 March 1979